BRITISH COLUMBIA
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BCStats

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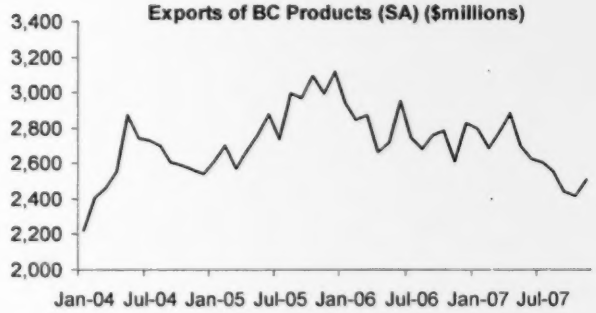
Current Statistics ◆ January 2008

- **Exports of BC products increased 3.9% (*seasonally adjusted*) in November.** This was the first time since April that the value of BC exports has risen. International shipments of most commodities were up from October levels, with the strongest gain (+10.4%) seen in exports of industrial & consumer products. The forest sector posted a marginal 1.6% increase, similar to the gain in exports of machinery, equipment & autos, while energy exports were up 4.9%.

  Shipments to the US remained weak, edging down 0.1% in November despite a modest bounce (+1.9%) from the forest sector. US-bound exports have been falling throughout the latter half of 2007. Exports to other destinations picked up significantly (+9.9%) in November, boosted by big increases in industrial & consumer (+21.7%) and energy (+15.5%) products.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada & BC Stats



- **British Columbia's unemployment rate remained unchanged at 4.2% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December as a slight decline in the number of people with jobs (-0.3%, or -7,000 people), was matched by a similar drop in the number who were either working or looking for work (-0.3%, or -6,900 people).** Nationally, the unemployment rate was unchanged at 5.9%. Unemployment rates in all four western provinces remained well below the national average. They were lowest in Alberta (3.2%) and Saskatchewan (4.0%), while both Manitoba and BC recorded a rate of 4.2%.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **BC's goods producing industries cut back 1.2% in December, as employment in the province's manufacturing industry continued to shrink, plunging 6.4%.** However, the construction industry took on 1.3% more workers in December, and even stronger gains were seen in some of the primary industries.

  In the service sector, employment stalled as seven industries downsized their workforce. The number of jobs in wholesale & retail trade (-1.4%) shrank for the third time in four months. However, there was significant job growth in transportation & warehousing (+6.0%) and public administration (+5.7%).

  Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **The number of housing starts in the province plunged 34.0% (*seasonally adjusted*) in December, following a national trend.** Canadian starts were down 19.6%, as new building activity plummeted in most provinces. Quebec (+2.7%) escaped the general malaise, but starts were down 30.5% in Ontario and fell 13.0% in Alberta. Nationally, the decline was attributed to winter weather conditions, together with volatility in markets for multiple-family units. In BC, starts of single-detached housing in urban areas of the province rose 15.2%, but builders of multiple-family units cut back (-53.8%), contributing to a similarly large decline in starts in the Vancouver area (-53.5%). *Data Source: CMHC*

- **The value of building permits issued by BC municipalities dropped sharply (-20.0%, *seasonally adjusted*) in November, eroding much of the 38.2% increase in October.** Residential permits tumbled (-28.5%) while the value of non-residential permits rose (+6.5%).

Victoria (+24.4%), Abbotsford (+16.9%) and Kelowna (+6.6%) all saw increases, but permits were down (-33.3%) in Vancouver following a substantial increase in October.

Data Source: Statistics Canada

- **Shipments of goods manufactured in British Columbia fell 1.8% (*seasonally adjusted*) in November, following a 1.4% gain in the previous month.** Producers of durable products (-1.7%) saw shipments slip after a relatively uneventful October (+0.2%). Shipments by the primary metal (-18.6%) industry dropped off substantially, and the machinery (-4.1%) industry was also off. On the other hand, BC producers of computer & electronic (+9.6%), non-metallic minerals (+5.0%) and wood (+1.1%) products were among those who fared better.

  On the non-durables side, shipments by manufacturers of paper (-5.4%) and chemicals (-5.3%) dropped off sharply in November. This was only partly offset by a 1.5% increase in the food industry. Overall shipments of non-durable goods declined 1.8%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

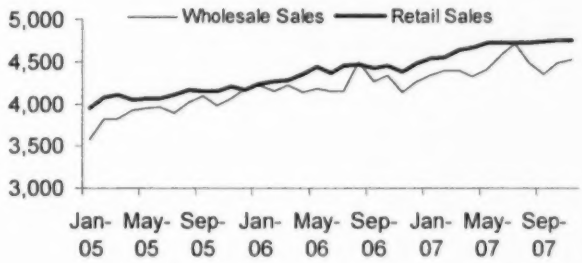
- **The province's year-over-year inflation rate remained relatively stable at 1.2% in December, down 0.1 percentage points from November.** British Columbians paid more for shelter (+2.4%) as consumers faced rising prices for homeowner insurance (+4.6%) and fuel oil (+23.7%). Energy prices were 2.7% higher in December, with much of that increase due to rising prices at the pump (+6.3%). Excluding energy, BC's inflation rate was at 1.0%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **British Columbia's *annual* inflation rate was 1.8% in 2007, significantly lower than the national inflation rate of 2.2%.** Lower-than-average increases in the cost of shelter (+2.0%, compared to +3.4% nationally) and the price of gasoline (+3.8%, compared to 4.5% nationally) offset higher-than-average increases in the cost of recreation (+1.4, compared to +1.2% nationally) and health & personal care (+1.4%, compared to 1.3% nationally). Vancouver's inflation rate in 2007 was 2.0% while Victoria's prices increased an average of only 1.2%. *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Sales by British Columbian retailers inched up by 0.2% (*seasonally adjusted*) in November.** An increase in sales at BC's gasoline stations and general merchandise stores compensated for flagging retail activity at used and recreational vehicle dealers. Total Canadian sales were driven 0.7% higher by moderate gains made in Saskatchewan (+1.9%), Ontario (+1.0%) and Alberta (+0.8%). *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

- **Wholesale sales in the province rose 1.0% (*seasonally adjusted*) in November.** Strong sales in building supplies, lumber & millwork and computers & other electrical equipment explained much of the increase and served to offset a downturn in metal products, food and motor vehicles. Nationally, wholesalers saw a modest 0.3% increase in sales with gains made in BC and Ontario (+0.6%) counterbalancing declines in Quebec (-0.2%) and the Atlantic provinces (-0.2%). *Data Source: Statistics Canada*

Sales of Wholesalers and Retailers in BC (SA)
($millions)



- **Production at BC sawmills was 18.6% lower in November than in the same month of 2006 due to the continuing labour dispute.** Both Coastal (-19.9%) and Interior (-18.4%) mills posted large declines. Outside of BC, Canadian production was also down, as volume was off in most lumber-producing provinces.

  Data Source: Statistics Canada, Catalogue 35-003-XIE

MONTHLY STATISTICS

	UNITS	REFERENCE PERIOD	CURRENT			MONTHLY AVERAGE YEAR-TO-DATE	
			LATEST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM LAST MONTH	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO	AMOUNT	% CHANGE FROM YEAR AGO
PRICES							
Consumer Price Index-BC	2002=100	Dec '07	110.1	0.0	1.2	110.0	1.7
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	2002=100	Dec '07	110.5	0.1	1.3	110.2	2.1
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	2002=100	Dec '07	109.7	0.1	0.6	109.8	1.1
Consumer Price Index-Canada	2002=100	Dec '07	112.0	0.1	2.4	111.5	2.1
Consumer Price Index-USA	1982-84=100	Dec '07	210.0	-0.1	4.1	207.3	2.9
Industry Price Index-Canada	1997=100	Nov '07	113.0	0.6	-0.6	115.6	1.8
LABOUR							
Unemployment Rate (SA)*-BC	Percent	Dec '07	4.2	(4.2)	(5.2)	4.2	(4.8)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-Canada	Percent	Dec '07	5.9	(5.9)	(6.1)	6.0	(6.3)
Unemployment Rate (SA)-USA	Percent	Dec '07	5.0	(4.7)	(4.4)	4.6	(4.6)
Unemployed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Dec '07	100.2	0.0	-18.0	99.6	-9.2
Employed (SA)-BC	Thousand	Dec '07	2,291.4	-0.3	3.3	2,266.1	3.2
Labour Force (SA)-BC	Thousand	Dec '07	2,391.7	-0.3	2.2	2,365.8	2.6
Participation Rate (SA)-BC	Percent	Dec '07	66.4	(66.7)	(66.2)	66.3	(65.7)
Regular EI Benefits Paid	$Million	Nov '07	49.0	11.4	-3.5	56.9	-5.7
Regular EI Beneficiaries	Persons	Nov '07	37,870	18.5	-7.9	40,218	-8.7
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	Dec '07	755.66	0.2	2.2	747.80	3.0
Wages and Salaries-BC (SA)	$Million	Sep '07	7,193.0	0.5	6.1	7,101.0	6.2
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC	1996=100	Nov '07	126.0	0.0	4.6	124.1	3.7
PRODUCTION - BC							
Lumber-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Nov '07	2,586.8	-14.8	-18.6	3,139.1	-10.0
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Nov '07	352	-15.4	4.5	392	-1.5
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Nov '07	51	-17.7	-39.3	72	-17.3
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes	Thousand	Nov '07	164	-2.4	3.8	158	-3.4
Coal-Tonnes	Thousand	Oct '07	1,768.0	-12.0	-8.4	1,897.0	8.1
Oil-Cubic Metres	Thousand	Sep '07	119.1	-2.3	-13.5	130.2	-7.4
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres	Million	Feb '07	2,777.9	-3.2	4.6	2,824.2	1.5
Electric Power Generated	GW.h	Oct '07	6,078.7	18.7	24.3	5,877.2	18.0
Manufacturing Shipments (SA)	$Million	Nov '07	3,482.2	-1.8	-2.7	3,622.2	-2.4
GENERAL							
Housing Starts-All Areas BC(SAAR)**	Thousand	Dec '07	33.9	-32.9	0.0	39.2	7.0
Housing Starts-USA (SAAR)**	Thousand	Dec '07	1,006.0	-14.2	-38.2	1,344.0	-25.8
Building Permits-BC (SA)	$Million	Nov '07	901.9	-20.0	-29.5	1,041.7	7.1
Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Nov '07	611.5	-28.5	-28.6	714.4	12.2
Non-Residential-BC (SA)	$Million	Nov '07	290.5	6.5	-31.3	327.4	-2.5
Retail Sales (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Nov '07	4,762.2	0.2	8.7	4,688.1	7.1
Wholesale Trade (NAICS) (SA)-BC	$Million	Nov '07	4,525.1	1.0	9.2	4,453.3	5.4
Tourism Room Revenues (SA)-BC	$Thousand	Sep '07	163,383	0.6	6.5	162,619	8.5
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Nov '07	46	31.4	12.2	39	-21.5
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	Nov '07	580	8.0	10.3	561	-6.3
Incorporations-BC	Number	Dec '07	2,358	-4.0	-0.2	2,569	0.5
Exports Originating in BC (SA)	$Million	Nov '07	2,509.6	3.9	-4.1	2,637.1	-5.1

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*SA indicates seasonal adjustment.
**SAAR indicates seasonally adjusted at annual rates.
Brackets () indicate that rates are shown instead of percentage changes.

ANNUAL STATISTICS

	UNITS	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
		2007	2006	2005	2004	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005
PRICES								
Consumer Price Index-BC	2002=100	110.0	108.1	106.3	104.2	1.8	1.7	2.0
Consumer Price Index-Vancouver	2002=100	110.2	108.0	106.0	104.0	2.0	1.9	1.9
Consumer Price Index-Victoria	2002=100	109.8	108.5	106.9	104.6	1.2	1.5	2.2
Consumer Price Index-Canada	2002=100	111.5	109.1	107.0	104.7	2.2	2.0	2.2
Consumer Price Index-USA*	1982-84=100	207.3	201.6	195.3	188.9	2.9	3.2	3.4
Industry Price Index-Canada*	1997=100	-	113.8	111.2	109.5		2.3	1.6
LABOUR								
Unemployment Rate-BC	Percent	4.2	4.8	5.9	7.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Rate-Canada	Percent	6.0	6.3	6.8	7.2	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployment Rate-USA*	Percent	4.6	4.6	5.1	5.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Unemployed-BC	Thousand	100.0	109.6	132.9	159.2	-8.8	-17.5	-16.5
Employed-BC	Thousand	2,266.3	2,195.5	2,130.5	2,062.7	3.2	3.1	3.3
Labour Force-BC	Thousand	2,366.4	2,305.1	2,263.4	2,221.9	2.7	1.8	1.9
Participation Rate-BC	Percent	66.3	65.7	65.6	65.5	n/a	n/a	n/a
Total EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	-	1,564.2	1,650.3	1,764.0		-5.2	-6.4
Regular EI Benefits Paid-BC*	$Million	-	723.7	837.4	960.4		-13.6	-12.8
Average Weekly Wage Rate-BC	Dollars	747.84	726.02	704.49	686.74	3.0	3.1	2.6
Wages and Salaries-BC*	$Million	-	80,805.2	74,448.5	69,383.5		8.5	7.3
Fixed-Weighted Earnings Index-BC*	1996=100	-	120.0	116.2	113.3		3.3	2.6
PRODUCTION - BC								
Lumber-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	-	41,050.7	41,012.9	39,879.3		0.1	2.
Market Pulp Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	-	4,736	4,932	4,724		-4.0	4.4
Newsprint Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	-	1,059	1,076	1,135		-1.6	-5.2
Other Paper Shipments-Tonnes*	Thousand	-	1,960	1,877	1,841		4.4	2.0
Coal-Tonnes*	Thousand	-	21,131.0	25,571.0	27,082.0		-17.4	-5.6
Oil-Cubic Metres*	Thousand	-	1,670.6	1,765.7	2,019.0		-5.4	-12.5
Natural Gas-Cubic Metres*	Million	-	35,291.7	31,892.8	31,201.3		10.7	2.2
Electric Power Generated*	GW.h	-	62,021.4	67,811.2	60,495.6		-8.5	12.1
Solid Mineral Shipments	$Million		5,620.4	4,924.8	3,674.5		14.1	34.0
Farm Cash Receipts**	$Million	-	2,333.2	2,405.2	2,403.1		-3.0	0.1
Manufacturing Shipments*	$Million	-	44,552.5	43,212.5	42,146.9		3.1	2.5
GENERAL								
Housing Starts-All Areas BC**	Thousand	39.2	36.4	34.7	32.9	7.6	5.1	5.3
Housing Starts-USA	Thousand	1,353.7	1,800.9	2,068.3	1,955.8	-24.8	-12.9	5.8
Building Permits-BC*	$Million	-	11,541.5	10,182.9	7,938.7		13.3	28.3
Residential-BC*	$Million	-	7,620.7	6,970.8	5,868.9		9.3	18.8
Non-Residential-BC*	$Million	-	3,920.8	3,212.1	2,069.8		22.1	55.2
Retail Sales (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	-	52,626.9	49,286.3	47,216.6		6.8	4.4
Wholesale Trade (NAICS)-BC*	$Million	-	50,724.8	47,277.0	43,497.7		7.3	8.7
Tourism Room Revenues-BC*	$Thousand	-	1,822.2	1,690.1	1,592.2		7.8	6.2
Business Bankruptcies-BC	Number	-	587	786	922		-25.3	-14.8
Consumer Bankruptcies-BC	Number	-	7,021	8,173	8,378		-14.1	-2.4
Incorporations-BC*	Number	30,824	30,667	28,593	25,428	0.5	7.3	12.4
Exports Originating in BC*	$Million	-	33,413.1	34,101.4	30,991.6		-2.0	10.0
Capital Expenditures-BC	$Million	38,747.9	37,575.8	33,254.2	29,664.7	3.1	13.0	12.1
Population-BC (as of July 1)	Thousands of Persons	4,380,256	4,320,255	4,260,246	4,203,807	1.4	1.4	1.3

* derived from monthly figures

**derived from quarterly figures

- indicates not yet available

n/a = not applicable

ECONOMIC PERFORMANCE

GROSS DOMESTIC PRODUCT

	YEAR				PERCENT CHANGE		
	2006	2005	2004	2003	2005-06	2004-05	2003-04
BRITISH COLUMBIA (Millions $Cdn)							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	180,328	169,404	157,365	145,642	6.4	7.7	8.0
Real Gross Domestic Product **(chained 2002 $)**	158,335	153,208	146,629	141,435	3.3	4.5	3.7
CANADA (Millions $Cdn)							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	1,446,307	1,375,080	1,290,828	1,213,175	5.2	6.5	6.4
Real GDP at Market Prices **(chained 2002 $)**	1,282,204	1,247,780	1,210,656	1,174,592	2.8	3.1	3.1
UNITED STATES (Billions $US) **							
Gross Domestic Product at Market Prices	13,194.7	12,433.9	11,685.9	10,960.8	6.1	6.4	6.6
Real GDP at Market Prices (chained 2000 $US)	11,319.4	11,003.4	10,675.8	10,301.0	2.9	3.1	3.6

*** US Department of Commerce (actual)*

INTEREST AND EXCHANGE RATES

(Source: Bank of Canada)

	Jan. 30/08	Jan. 23/08	Dec. 19/07	Jan. 31/07
	PERCENT PER ANNUM			
CANADA				
Prime Business Rate	5.75	5.75	6.00	6.00
Bank Rate	4.25	4.25	4.50	4.50
Marketable Government Bond Rate (over 10 years)	4.17	4.17	4.09	4.23
Conventional Mortgages - 1 Year	7.35	7.35	7.20	6.50
- 5 Years	7.39	7.49	7.39	6.65
UNITED STATES				
Prime Rate	6.50	6.50	7.25	8.25
EXCHANGE RATES	AVERAGE NOON SPOT RATE			
US Dollar	0.9937	1.0286	1.0056	1.1792
Japanese Yen	0.0093	0.0098	0.0089	0.0097
British Pound	1.9754	2.0071	2.0043	2.3123
Euro	1.4688	1.4990	1.4423	1.5328

FORECASTS

	Real Gross Domestic Product			Unemployment Rate		Consumer Price Index	
	2007	2008	2009	2008	2009	2008	2009
	% Change	*% Change*	*% Change*	*%*	*%*	*% Change*	*% Change*
BRITISH COLUMBIA							
BC Government (Sept. 2007, 1st Quarterly Report)	3.0	2.9	3.1	4.6	4.8	2.1	2.1
Credit Union Central BC (August 2007)	3.0	4.0	3.8	3.9	4.1	2.2	2.1
Conference Board of Canada (October 19, 2007)	2.9	3.0	3.1	4.0	4.0	na	na
Scotia Bank Group (January 15, 2008)	3.0	3.0	3.2	3.9	3.8	na	na
TD Bank (January 10, 2008)	3.2	2.8	3.2	4.3	4.2	1.7	2.3
CIBC WM Economics (October 26, 2007)	3.3	3.3	na	4.2	na	2.2	na
Global Insight (January 2008)	3.1	2.9	3.0	4.2	4.5	2.1	2.2
CANADA							
TD Bank (January 10, 2008)	2.5	1.9	2.5	6.0	6.1	1.4	2.0
CIBC WM Economics (January 18, 2008))	2.6	2.4	na	6.1	na	2.0	na
Global Insight (January 2008)	2.6	2.2	2.4	6.1	6.2	1.9	2.1
UNITED STATES							
TD Bank (December 13, 2007)	2.2	1.8	2.8	5.3	5.6	2.3	1.8
CIBC WM Economics (January 18, 2008)	2.2	2.0	na	5.2	na	3.7	na
Global Insight (January 2008)	2.2	1.9	2.7	5.1	5.1	2.2	1.6

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